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C O N F I D E N T I A L LJUBLJANA 000894

SIPDIS

DEPT FOR EUR/NCE

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TAGS: [ETRD](#) [EFIN](#) [PREL](#) [PGOV](#)

SUBJECT: SLOVENIA ON EIB IN SYRIA: PUSH THE BIG PLAYERS

REF: A. SECSTATE 229611

[B.](#) LJUBLJANA 0886

Classified By: Charge d'Affaires, a.i. Maryruth Coleman, reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

[11.](#) (C) Econoff delivered ref A points 30 December to Sibil Svilan, CEO of the Slovene Export Corporation and Slovenian representative to the European Investment Bank. A former senior Finance Ministry official and long time EIB board member, Svilan said he was not aware of the USG position on the loan to Syria, but doubted if much could be done as "the decision has already been taken." Svilan noted that while Slovenia takes part in EIB decisions, it focuses mainly on the bank's operations in the Balkans and southeast Europe.

[12.](#) (C) Svilan said several times that Slovenia is "not an active participant" in the FEMIP and, as such, is not involved in what he termed "policy issues" such as whether or not to loan to Syria because of concerns that the USG and EU have with the Syrian government. Svilan also noted on several occasions that Slovenia has "only one vote" on the board and that in the future the USG should "push such issues with big 'Mediterranean' players" such as France, Spain, and Italy. He did not seem to have an issue with the decision that was made, however, and said he felt that this was a good investment to "help improve life in the region for less well off Syrians." Svilan said, however, that he would "bear the American concerns in mind" in the future should similar issues come up.

[13.](#) (C) Comment: Svilan spent much of the meeting emphasizing an old refrain that Slovenia is small and therefore has little influence on big issues. We have lately seen a broadening world view from our contacts at the MFA and other Ministries more regularly involved with foreign affairs. Svilan's response, however, demonstrates a disconnect between those who make foreign policy in Slovenia and technocrats from smaller agencies similar to what we have read in responses to ref A from other European capitals.

COLEMAN

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